



17 December 2024

## **SPECIFYING THE USE OF GLOBAL ACCREDITATION COOPERATION INCORPORATED ACCREDITATION**

This letter describes the need to change how the use of accreditation is specified in regulations and other specification documents following the establishment of the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated (hereafter referred to as the Cooperation).

### **Establishment of the Cooperation**

The International Accreditation Forum (IAF) (which was formed in 1993), is a global association of accreditation bodies, certification body associations and other stakeholders involved in conformity assessment activities in a variety of fields including management systems, validation/verification, products, services and personnel.

Similarly, the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) (which started as a conference in 1977 and then became a formal cooperation in 1996), is the international authority on laboratory, inspection body, proficiency testing provider and reference material producer accreditation, with a membership consisting of accreditation bodies and affiliated organisations throughout the world.

Since their formation, both organizations have promoted the worldwide acceptance of conformity assessment results by conformity assessment bodies accredited by their accreditation body members and the increased use and acceptance by industry and governments of the results from accredited conformity assessment bodies (such as laboratories, inspection bodies, certification bodies, proficiency testing providers, reference material producers, and validation and verification bodies).

In 2019, the members of IAF and ILAC made the decision to establish a single international organization for accreditation to replace IAF and ILAC.

Following extensive work and discussions within IAF and ILAC in 2024 the IAF and ILAC membership agreed the Constitution and General Rules for a new organization, the Cooperation, to take over the existing roles of both IAF and ILAC and following the annual meetings of IAF and ILAC in October 2024, commenced the formal process to incorporate the Cooperation in New Zealand.

The target date (known as the Transition Date) for the Cooperation to become operational and to take over the roles of IAF and ILAC is provisionally January 2026; more information on the transition and exact date will be issued by the end of April 2025.



## **Implications for Specifying the use of Accreditation in Regulations and other Specification Documents**

### Mutual Recognition

Accreditation bodies, which have been evaluated by competent peers, sign arrangements that enhance the acceptance of products and services across national borders, thereby creating a framework to support international trade through the removal of technical barriers. These arrangements are also used to enhance the confidence of results used within economies.

The purpose of these arrangements is to ensure mutual recognition of accredited services between signatories, and subsequently acceptance of accredited services in many markets based on one accreditation.

### Specifying the use of Accreditation until the Transition Date

Until the Transition Date and until the process of establishing the internal processes and procedures of the Cooperation is completed, it is important to highlight that IAF and ILAC shall maintain normal operations with no changes.

IAF and ILAC have issued guidance in the past to assist regulators (who may be national, state, provincial, or even municipal in their scope) and other specifiers in drafting regulations or specifications. Until the process of creating the Cooperation is completed, this guidance remains valid.

Until the Transition Date, the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (IAF MLA) and the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (ILAC MRA) shall remain operational for signatory accreditation bodies and conformity assessment bodies accredited by them.

Results issued by conformity assessment bodies within their scope of accreditation by IAF MLA or ILAC MRA signatories shall remain valid and shall continue to be accepted under the arrangements.

The rules regarding the use of the IAF MLA Mark and the ILAC MRA Mark, either on their own or in combination with a signatory's own logo, remain as now and will continue to be available to be used appropriately.

### Specifying the use of Accreditation after the Transition Date

When the Cooperation becomes operational on the Transition Date, it is expected that the members of IAF and ILAC will transfer to the Cooperation. IAF and ILAC will become non-operational from the Transition Date but will remain in existence for a period of time to enable, amongst other things, the ongoing management and protection of the IAF MLA Mark and the ILAC MRA Mark. IAF and ILAC will be wound up after the protection of the IAF and ILAC marks is no longer needed.



The IAF MLA and the ILAC MRA will be subsumed into the Cooperation's Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA), with recognition of existing accredited conformity assessment results continuing without interruption under the Cooperation's MRA.

It is acknowledged that regulations and specifications worldwide that currently specify the use of accredited services that are under the IAF MLA or the ILAC MRA may take some time to be amended to refer to the Cooperation instead of IAF or ILAC.

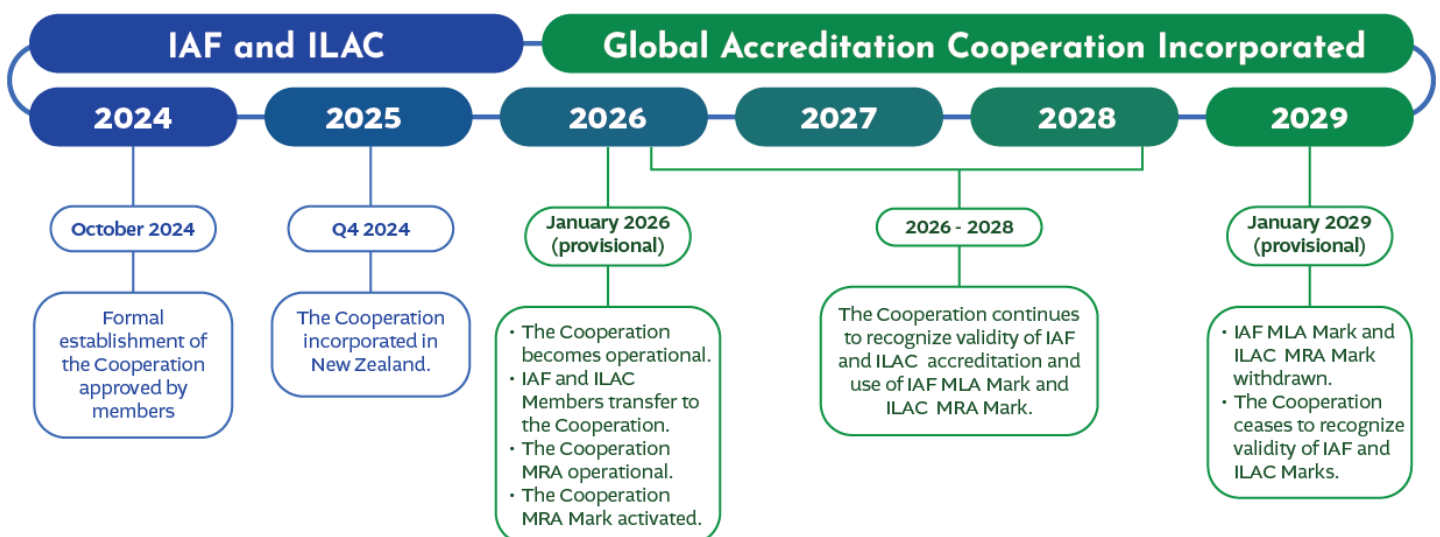
The Cooperation will work with all its members to ensure references to the IAF MLA and ILAC MRA are no longer made in regulations and specifications and the IAF MLA Mark and the ILAC MRA Mark will no longer be used. IAF and ILAC members should begin now in working with their respective regulatory bodies, scheme owners and other stakeholders, to begin the transition of the references following the Transition Date.

The Cooperation will recognize the ongoing use of the IAF MLA Mark and the ILAC MRA Mark as if their own and as equivalent to the Cooperation's MRA Mark. It is intended that the Cooperation's MRA Mark will become available and be able to be used from the Transition Date.

Over time regulations and specifications should only refer to the Cooperation. Furthermore, at some point only the Cooperation's MRA Mark will then be allowed to be used and the Cooperation will no longer recognize IAF or ILAC accreditations.

It is anticipated that the date on which the IAF MLA Mark and the ILAC MRA mark will no longer be able to be used will be 3 years after the Transition Date.

### Anticipated Timeline





### **Suggested Action from Regulators and Specifiers**

Regulators and specifiers are encouraged to work directly with appropriate IAF and ILAC members and plan to make any necessary changes to their documents as soon as possible after the Transition Date.

### **Enquiries**

The Cooperation's Executive Committee, through its Secretary, shall keep IAF and ILAC members informed of the progress of the transitional plan.

Should you have any questions regarding the transition please contact the Cooperation's Secretary: [secretary@globac.org](mailto:secretary@globac.org)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Etty Feller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Etty" being more prominent than the last name "Feller".

Etty Feller  
ILAC Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Emanuele Riva". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "Emanuele" and the last name "Riva" clearly visible.

Emanuele Riva  
IAF Chair